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A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF LONDON,

AT THE

PRIMARY VISITATION

OF THAT

DIOCESE

IN THE YEAR MDCCXC.

BY BEILBY LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

LONDON:

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MDCCXC.

TO THE REVEREND

THE CLERGY

OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON,

THIS CHARGE,

PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS WITH GREAT REGARD

INSCRIBED

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE

FRIEND AND SERVANT,

B. LONDON.

FULHAM,
JUNE 30, 1790.

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REVEREND BRETHREN,

IT is now upwards of two years ſince I was appointed to fill this important See; and it may perhaps have been expected that I ſhould have taken an earlier opportunity of aſſembling you together for the purpoſe of obtaining a more intimate acquaintance with my Dioceſe, and the various concerns belonging to it. But I conceived that this end would be more effectually, though not ſo immediately, anſwered, by waiting till the uſual period of a Viſitation returned; and in the mean while collecting all the information I could from various quarters; and more particularly from the anſwers to the ſeveral queries that were ſome months ago circulated round the Dioceſe.

From theſe, as from the moſt authentic ſources, I ſhall now ſelect for our mutual conſideration ſuch topics as appear to me moſt important. But I cannot do this without firſt ſatisfying your feelings and my own, by paying ſome part at leaſt of that tribute which is juſtly due to the memory of that great and good man who immediately preceded

me *; whoſe loſs we have all ſo ſeverely felt, and ſhall continue long to feel. To do full juſtice to ſuch a character as his, is much beyond my power, and is more than our preſent buſineſs, and the time allotted to it would admit. It muſt be left to thoſe whoſe peculiar province it is to undertake ſuch a taſk, and whoſe abilities are equal to the ſubject. But we may be allowed in the mean while to pay a tranſient homage at leaſt to the talents and the virtues of this excellent Prelate, and learn to profit by them both. We may juſtly admire the univerſality of that genius which could apply itſelf, and with almoſt equal ſucceſs, to ſo many different branches of literature; to Poetry, to Grammar, to Criticiſm, to Theology, to Oriental Learning. In each of theſe he has diſplayed the talents of a maſter, and the originality of true genius. But in that admired work the Prelections on the ſacred Poetry of the Hebrews, he has deſcribed and illuſtrated the diſtinct properties and excellencies of each particular ſpecies of that poetry with ſuch admirable taſte and ſkill, with ſuch exuberant richneſs of imagery, ſuch variety, copiouſneſs, elegance and rotundity of ſtile, as few writers have ever yet equalled in a language not their own.

With ſuch various and diſtinguiſhed talents in almoſt every branch of literature; with a conduct perfectly inoffenſive and irreproachable; with a

* Biſhop Lowth.

temper

temper naturally mild and even; with manners the moſt gentle, unaſſuming, and conciliating, it can be no wonder, if he attracted the notice and the patronage of the great, whoſe friendſhip gradually raiſed him through the various honours of his profeſſion to that high ſtation which he was ſo peculiarly qualified to dignify and adorn. And this in fact we all know he did while his health and vigour of mind and body remained firm and unbroken. But the very painful diſorders and ſevere domeſtic loſſes with which it pleaſed God to afflict him in the evening of his life, and which he bore with the moſt perfect fortitude, compoſure and reſignation, ſoon rendered it impoſſible for him to take that active part in the affairs of his Dioceſe, which otherwiſe he was perfectly well diſpoſed, and perfectly well qualified to take. Yet under all theſe diſadvantages he found means to exert himſelf effectually in one remarkable inſtance, and to render himſelf moſt eminently uſeful, not only to his own Dioceſe, but to the whole church of England, and to religion at large. I mean, the noble ſtand he made againſt the validity and legality of general bonds of reſignation. By his perſeverance and firmneſs in combating the received doctrine reſpecting theſe bonds, he finally annihilated them; and thus reſcued the clergy and the church of England from that oppreſſion, and that diſgrace in which they had ſo frequently been involved by thoſe

ſhameful and deluſive contracts between the patron and the incumbent.

It is with difficulty I reſtrain myſelf from entering more minutely into the various excellencies of this diſtinguiſhed prelate, with whoſe friendſhip I was honoured, and whoſe memory I ſhall always reverence; but I muſt not detain you any longer from the buſineſs in which we are all more immediately intereſted.

Now the firſt thing that preſents itſelf in your Anſwers to the Queries is that moſt important article, on which my thoughts have long been anxiouſly engaged, and which indeed muſt be the foundation of every miniſterial duty, the article of RESIDENCE.

It is with ſingular pleaſure I obſerve that there are in this Dioceſe many excellent parochial clergymen, who reſide conſtantly on their benefices; who enter with zeal and ardour into all the various duties of their profeſſion, and give up their whole time and thoughts to the inſtruction, the edification and the ſalvation of their reſpective flocks. Moſt honourable is it for them, and moſt happy for their people, when this is the caſe. But this alas is not always the caſe! There is much too large a proportion, (eſpecially in ſome diſtricts) who live at a diſtance

diſtance from their cures, and whoſe pariſhioners muſt of courſe be deprived of thoſe various and important benefits which reſult, and which can only reſult from the perſonal care and conſtant attention of the principal himſelf. To leſſen this evil as much as poſſible is an object of ſuch unſpeakable magnitude and importance, and will ſo materially contribute to the credit of our order, to the ſucceſs of our labours, to the advancement of religion, and the welfare of the community, that I cannot allow myſelf to doubt your readineſs to aſſiſt me in removing every difficulty, and every obſtacle to the attainment of an end which it is our common intereſt, and our common duty to promote.

There are indeed two impediments to conſtant reſidence which cannot eaſily be ſurmounted; the firſt is (what unfortunately prevails in ſome parts of this Dioceſe) unwholeſomeneſs of ſituation; the other is the poſſeſſion of a ſecond benefice. Yet even theſe will not always juſtify a total and perpetual abſence from your cures. The unhealthineſs of many places is of late years by various improvements greatly abated, and there are now few ſo circumſtanced as not to admit of reſidence there in *ſome* parts of the year, without any danger to the conſtitution.

In the caſe of two benefices, where the livings are held by diſpenſation, the very inſtrument of diſpenſation

penſation requires that the incumbent ſhall, on that benefice from which we he is moſt abſent, preach thirteen ſermons in the year, and exerciſe hoſpitality for two months. But though that inſtrument requires no more than this, yet where it can be done with any convenience it will he highly uſeful for the incumbent to divide his time equally between his two benefices; or rather to diſtribute it in ſuch proportions as the ſize and magnitude and importance of each ſeems to demand. It was on this ground, I apprehend, that diſpenſations to hold two benefices were originally granted. They were granted as rewards to men of extraordinary talents, learning and piety; and it was preſumed that clergymen of this deſcription might, by dividing their care between two pariſhes, render their abilities, their zeal, their activity more extenſively uſeful, than if they had been confined entirely to one.

Whoever then poſſeſſes this privilege, will feel himſelf bound in conſcience to act up to the ſpirit and the conditions of it. He will, if poſſible, reſide alternately on *both* his benefices. But if there ſhould be any real and unavoidable impediment to this, he will at leaſt fix his abode conſtantly on one, and will moſt clearly ſee that an entire deſertion of *both* his benefices is a violation of duty which nothing can juſtify, and which cannot be endured.

But

But the greater part conſiſts of thoſe who have only one benefice; and as there is then no other to draw off the incumbent's attention from that one object, it is evident that nothing but extreme ill health, or ſome other equally juſt and powerful impediment, can excuſe him from that reſidence which is required by the laws of the land both civil and eccleſiaſtical, as well as by every motive that can bind the conſcience, or influence the conduct of an honeſt man. Theſe motives will, if I augur right, have their full force on minds ſuch as yours, and will lead you even to anticipate my wiſhes in this inſtance. You will yourſelves feel much more forcibly than I can repreſent to you, the propriety, the decency, the duty of living in the midſt of your pariſhioners, and of making that your principal home, where the ſcene of your principal buſineſs lies; and you will not, I perſuade myſelf, allow yourſelves to be prevailed on by any temptations of eaſe, of pleaſure, or of mere convenience, to abandon thoſe of whoſe ſalvation you have moſt ſolemnly taken the charge, and bound it by the moſt ſacred ties upon your own ſouls. You will feel that the care of a pariſh is a moſt ſerious and important truſt, and that it is not without the moſt indiſpenſable neceſſity to be devolved on any other but the incumbent himſelf. You will undoubtedly recollect that when you are inſtituted to a benefice you do not ſay that you will execute the office by yourſelves, or by your ſufficient deputy.

No.

No. The biſhop does in the moſt expreſs terms commit to you, and to you only, the cure of the ſouls of that pariſh, and you muſt in your own perſons be anſwerable for their ſalvation. STEWARDS, WATCHMEN, SHEPHERDS, LABOURERS, Theſe, and every other expreſſion that implies *perſonal attention*, unremitted aſſiduity, vigilance and fidelity, are applied to you in ſcripture. "You are commanded before God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-ſuffering and doctrine; to watch in all things; to do the work of an evangeliſt, and make full proof of your miniſtry." And the Ordination Office enjoins "that you never ceaſe your labour, your care and diligence until you have done all that lieth in you according to your bounden duty to bring all ſuch as are, or ſhall be committed to your charge unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and that ripeneſs and perfectneſs of age in Chriſt, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciouſneſs in life."

Theſe are all of them moſt evidently *perſonal duties*; and it is to my conception utterly impoſſible for any man who ſeriouſly believes that he muſt give an account of his ſtewardſhip at the laſt day, to read ſuch injunctions as theſe, and then render himſelf incapable of fulfilling them, by abſenting himſelf from his cure, ſeeking amuſement or employment elſewhere, and truſting to another for

the diſcharge of duties, which belong *ſolely and entirely* to himſelf. Let him be ever ſo careful in the choice of his ſubſtitute, can he be perfectly ſure that nothing neceſſary will be omitted, and that not only all the ſtated offices of the church, but all the various and no leſs important *private* duties of the paſtoral care will be performed with the ſame exactneſs and punctuality as if he himſelf had been preſent? Is he in ſhort prepared to anſwer, as he muſt, at the tribunal of Chriſt, for every neglect that has happened, every ſoul that has been loſt among thoſe committed to his care, and whom perhaps he has never ſeen or thought of for months and years together? This is a moſt awful conſideration; and I leave it to the ſerious attention of every one whom it concerns.

Another circumſtance which deſerves notice, and ſeems to require regulation is, The Sunday duty performed in the churches of this Dioceſe. I obſerve that in general, throughout the county of Eſſex at leaſt, there is ſervice only once in the day. I obſerve too that this has in ſeveral pariſhes been a long eſtabliſhed cuſtom, and therefore I impute no blame to thoſe who have only conformed to that cuſtom. Yet ſtill I conceive they will upon reflexion ſee the neceſſity of making ſome improvement in this article. In moſt other Dioceſes the practice, I believe, is different. In that at leaſt from which I was removed to this, there were

through a very conſiderable part of it, and that even in the ſmalleſt pariſhes, not only prayers, but a ſermon too, both parts of the day. I do not mean to require this from you; but I do very earneſtly recommend it to you, in general, to have a ſermon once, and prayers twice in the day, and more eſpecially in thoſe places where this was formerly the practice, and where ſingle duty has been a late innovation. *There* I muſt beg that the antient cuſtom may be reſtored. In other caſes, and particularly where the pariſhes are ſo near each other, that the congregations not only may, but actually do go from one church to the other, there perhaps ſervice once a day in each may be ſufficient. But where this is not the caſe, it appears to me highly neceſſary that each pariſh ſhould be called to public worſhip, as the Canons, the Liturgy and the Rubric evidently require, both morning and evening. Unleſs this is done, the ſervice is incompleat, there will be one half of the day totally unoccupied by religious duties; and if it is not employed in them, it will be employed, I fear, in a very different manner. It is too large a portion of time to be truſted entirely in the hands of the common people. It is too much to be ſpared from that ſacred day, the whole of which, even when moſt religiouſly obſerved, is hardly ſufficient to counteract the bad impreſſions of the other ſix days of the week. On the due obſervance of this day, and the appropriation of a large portion

of

of it to ſacred purpoſes, depends, I am convinced, the very exiſtence of religion in this country. Scarce one ſymptom of it ever appears amongſt us except on the Lord's-day: and when the ſanctity of that is gone, every thing is gone with it. We cannot therefore beſtow too much time and pains in keeping up to the utmoſt, the ſpirit of that divine inſtitution, we cannot reſcue too much of it from the growing encroachments of worldly buſineſs, and worldly pleaſure.

It appears indeed that ſome exertions rather more than common are neceſſary to awaken in the general maſs of the people that ſenſe of duty, and ardour of devotion, which ſeem almoſt extinguiſhed in their breaſts. It appears that though your efforts for that purpoſe ſeem not to have been wanting, yet, in many places, ſcarce any of them can be prevailed on to attend the ſacrament of the Lord's-ſupper, or ſend their children to be inſtructed in the Catechiſm. The conſequence is, that both theſe duties are in ſome pariſhes entirely omitted, and, in ſeveral others, are with great difficulty kept from ſharing the ſame fate. Yet nothing is more certain than that they are both of them duties of the very higheſt importance. What then is to be done? Shall we entirely give up theſe great points, or ſhall we not rather redouble our earneſtneſs and aſſiduity in preſſing the indiſpenſable neceſſity of them on the minds of the people, and even call in

to our aid every expedient that ſeems likely to attract their notice and fix their attention? Now there are two things which appear to me to be extremely well calculated for this purpoſe: the firſt is A REGULAR COURSE OF LECTURES ON THE CHURCH-CATECHISM: the other is THE INSTITUTION OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

The former may be given in country pariſhes during the Summer months, in that part of the day when there is no ſermon. In London it may, for a part of the Winter, be ſubſtituted in the room of the afternoon ſermon.

Such a practice will, I know from experience, be attended with the very beſt effects. The novelty of it will draw your pariſhioners to church, and engage their attention. It will give an opportunity of inſtructing not only the children, but many grown people in country pariſhes in the principles of the Chriſtian religion, of which they are in general moſt deplorably ignorant. And this being done methodically and ſyſtematically, and with a reference to the Church-Catechiſm which they all have in their hands, will make a ſtrong and lively impreſſion on their memories and their minds. More particularly, in the courſe of it, the Sacrament of the Lord's-ſupper may be more minutely and familiarly and diſtinctly explained than in any other way, and the abſolute neceſſity of receiving it,

it, may be repeatedly and powerfully enforced. This, added to ſermons and private exhortation, will in the end have the effect of exciting a greater regard to this ſacred ordinance. And theſe voluntary exertions of yours will pleaſe and conciliate the good-will and affections of your people, will convince them that you are *really intereſted* in their welfare; will awaken the ſame ſenſe of duty in *them* that they obſerve in *you*, and will render them more regular and punctual in their attendance both on the Lord's-ſupper, and every other part of divine ſervice.

But on the riſing generation you may make ſtill deeper and more laſting impreſſions, and that principally by the ſecond thing I recommended to you, the inſtitution of Sunday-Schools. Theſe, I obſerve, have made their way but very ſlowly into this Dioceſe, and are as yet found but in very few parts of it; in London and Weſtminſter I believe not at all. This may be owing partly to the various objections that were at firſt raiſed againſt them; partly perhaps to an idea that they were not ſo neceſſary in the ſouthern as in the northern parts of the kingdom, and that in the metropolis more eſpecially, on account of the great number of Charity-Schools, they were altogether needleſs. But I truſt that neither theſe reaſons nor any others (for there are none that deſerve the leaſt notice) will any longer operate on your minds to the ex-

cluſion of theſe moſt admirable ſeminaries of piety and virtue. The objections made to them are found on trial to be perfectly frivolous and groundleſs; and ſo far is it from being true that they are leſs wanted here than elſewhere, that from what I already know of the ſtate of this Dioceſe, from your own reports to me, they are peculiarly and indiſpenſably neceſſary to reſtore and invigorate the ſpirit of religion among the lower claſſes of the community.

In London and Weſtminſter, it is true, there are a multitude of Charity-Schools, which may ſeem ſufficient to anſwer this purpoſe. But upon enquiry, you will, I believe, find that even theſe, numerous as they are, comprehend but a very ſmall part of the children of the poor; and that there are ſtill in almoſt every pariſh, eſpecially the larger ones, many hundreds of ignorant wretched young creatures of both ſexes totally deſtitute of all education, totally unacquainted with the very firſt elements of religion, and who perhaps never once entered within the walls of a Church. It is from theſe principally that our ſtreets and highways are filled with miſcreants of various kinds; and I believe few things would contribute more to leſſen their number than the eſtabliſhment of Sunday-Schools in every diſtrict of the metropolis. This effect has at leaſt, I know, been experienced from it in ſeveral large populous provincial towns of this kingdom; and

why

why the ſame effect ſhould not follow from the ſame cauſe in this capital it is not eaſy to comprehend.

But however this may be, certain it is that in the kingdom at large nothing will more effectually ſerve the cauſe of religion and good morals than raiſing up a race of young people, who have been early and carefully and diligently inſtructed in the rudiments of Chriſtianity, who have been trained up from their very infancy in the habit of attending the houſe of God; who are ſtrongly impreſſed with a reverence for all its ſacred ordinances, and have been accuſtomed to ſpend the greateſt part of the Lord's-day religiouſly, ſeriouſly and devoutly. When once a young ſucceſſion of this kind has been brought up under your own hands, I will venture, without the leaſt heſitation, to predict that you will ſee a moſt happy change in the appearance of your congregations, and the deportment of your pariſhioners; that you will ſee your churches crouded with worſhippers, and your altars with communicants. I could ſay much more on this very intereſting ſubject of Sunday-Schools; but having already explained my ſentiments at large concerning them in a letter to the Clergy of my former Dioceſe, of which a few copies will now be put into your hands, I beg leave to refer you to that for farther information.

There

There is another point, to which I would beg leave to call your ſerious attention, and that is the improvement of our Parochial Pſalmody. This moſt pleaſing and affecting part of divine ſervice is now (through a large part of the kingdom at leaſt) rendered almoſt totally uſeleſs to the church of England, where on the contrary one ſhould expect to find it, in its higheſt ſtate of perfection. But from this it is at a great diſtance indeed. In country pariſhes it is generally engroſſed by a ſelect band of ſingers, who have been taught by ſome itinerant maſter to ſing in the worſt manner, a moſt wretched ſet of pſalm tunes in three or four parts, ſo complex, ſo difficult and ſo totally void of all true harmony that it is altogether impoſſible for any of the congregation to take a part with them, who therefore ſit abſorbed in ſilent admiration, or total inattention, without conſidering themſelves as in any degree concerned in what is going forwards. In London and a part of Weſtminſter this buſineſs is in a great meaſure confined to the charity-children, who though they exert their little abilities to ſing their Maker's praiſes in the beſt manner they can, yet for want of right inſtruction to modulate their voices properly, almoſt conſtantly ſtrain them to ſo high a pitch as to diſguſt and offend the ear, and repel inſtead of raiſing the devout affections of the hearers. And it is generally a conteſt between them and the organ which ſhall be the loudeſt, and give moſt pain to the ear.

By

By this means the chief end and deſign of pſalm-ſinging is compleatly defeated. For whatever may have been advanced to the contrary, it is moſt certain that Parochial Pſalmody was originally intended to be *a part of divine worſhip*, an offering of praiſe, adoration and thankſgiving to the Almighty, in which of courſe the whole congregation, as being all equally intereſted, were to take an equal ſhare. And when this is done with propriety and judgment, it has a moſt noble and edifying effect; and, (as a very good judge of muſical compoſition has well expreſſed it,) "forms one of the grandeſt ſcenes of unaffected piety that human nature can afford *."

It would therefore add greatly to the ſolemnity and dignity and beauty of our public worſhip if this part of it was reſtored to its ancient purity and ſimplicity, and general congregational pſalmody univerſally revived. For this purpoſe in the London churches it would be extremely uſeful to ſelect a few of the charity-children, who have the beſt voices, and the beſt ear for muſic, from the reſt, and have them taught to ſing well and in their natural tone. And directions ſhould be given to the organiſt not to drown and overpower the ſingers by the unremitted loudneſs and violent intonations of the full organ, but merely to conduct and re-

* Dr. Brown's Diſſertation on Poetry and Muſic.

gulate and ſuſtain their voices in a low and a ſoft accompaniment on what is called the choir organ. This would render the pſalm-ſinging ſo pleaſing and melodious that the greater part of the congregation would ſoon be tempted and by theſe helps would be enabled to join in it.

In country pariſhes, where there are in general neither charity-children nor organs, it may be more difficult perhaps to reſtore the pſalmody to its primitive ſtate, and baniſh the corruptions of it introduced by the ſelect village choir. Yet the obſtacles are by no means inſuperable. By a little management the ſingers may be prevailed on to admit ſome of the plain pſalm tunes, and more may gradually find their way into the church, in which the congregation, when familiarized to them, will ſoon become perfect, and prefer them to any other. This will be greatly aided by training up ſome of the moſt promiſing children of the pariſh in the conſtant practice of plain pſalmody, till by degrees a large part of the congregation have been thus inſtructed from their youth, and a ſelect band will be no longer neceſſary. This, I know, has been already done in ſeveral pariſhes with great ſucceſs, eſpecially in thoſe where Sunday-Schools have been eſtabliſhed; in which it is often a part, and a moſt uſeful part of their education to exerciſe and improve the ſcholars in pſalm-ſinging, with which they are in general much delighted, and in

more reſpects than one greatly benefited. By theſe means a conſiderable choir of well taught young people may in a few years be formed in every church, who will ſerve as guides and inſtructors to the reſt of the congregation; and when it is conſidered that there are now near 300,000 ſunday ſcholars in various parts of the kingdom, if one third of them can be taught to perform the beſt Pſalm tunes tolerably well, theſe uſeful inſtitutions will contribute no leſs to the improvement of our parochial Pſalmody, than to the reformation of the lower orders of the people.

To render this a ſtill more rational and edifying part of our public worſhip, a ſelection ſhould be made (or ſome of thoſe already made ſhould be adopted) of proper portions of the Pſalms from the new verſion, which ſhould be adapted to ſome of the plaineſt, ſimpleſt and eaſieſt of our moſt ancient and popular melodies. By the frequent repetition of theſe, and the expedients above mentioned, and many others that will naturally ſuggeſt themſelves to men of judgment, zeal and piety, there can be no doubt but that this part of divine ſervice would quickly recover its ancient ſweetneſs and ſolemnity, and become a moſt delightful and moſt intereſting exerciſe of piety. Many of thoſe who ſeparate from our communion underſtand perfectly well the uſe and force of this commanding inſtrument of devotion, and apply it with ſucceſs. With the

ſame attention, and with perhaps ſtill more ſkilful management, its ſucceſs in our own churches would be ſtill greater: and the effects of it in various points of view would be much more important than many are perhaps aware of. It would operate as a very powerful attraction to your people; it would render your congregations more numerous and more conſtant, it would enliven and animate their devotion, it would add one charm more to our excellent form of worſhip, and whenever you had occaſion to ſolicit the benevolence of your pariſhioners for your charity-ſchools, you would have no need to call in the aid of any other muſical performers; for there is no other kind of muſical compoſition ſo well calculated to touch and affect the heart, and melt it into tenderneſs, kindneſs and compaſſion towards the whole human race, as well-conſtructed and well-regulated Pſalmody *.

At a time then when every other ſpecies of muſic is cultivated with uncommon ardour, and is become the prevailing taſte and paſſion of the age, let ſome ſhare of our attention be beſtowed on our parochial Pſalmody; which, though of a humbler and more ſober caſt than the generality of our muſical performances, yet from its connection with

* Whoever wiſhes for further information on this ſubject will receive great ſatisfaction from two very ſenſible little tracts lately publiſhed, one by Dr. Vincent called *Conſiderations on Parochial Muſic*, the other by Mr. Wharton entitled *An Eſſay on Pſalmody*.

religion,

religion, from its forming an ancient and eſſential part of our public ſervice, from its known and powerful influence on the minds and morals of the great maſs of the people, is of more *real* and *national* and *practical* importance, than even thoſe ſublime and elaborate compoſitions of our great maſters which are ſo generally and ſo juſtly admired.

And there is one circumſtance which ought for ever to recommend and endear it to this proteſtant country, which is; that it was in the higheſt eſtimation with thoſe moſt illuſtrious of men, the firſt REFORMERS, both at home and abroad; that it was more particularly one of the principal inſtruments of the rapid progreſs of the reformation in this kingdom; and that it gave conſolation and ſupport to confeſſors and martyrs in that glorious cauſe, under the ſevereſt perſecutions, and even in the midſt of flames and tortures *.

* It will not, I hope, be inferred from any thing here ſaid that I am an enemy to Choral and Cathedral Muſic. On the contrary, in its proper place (that is in Cathedrals, Royal Chapels, &c.) I am a zealous admirer of it. But I have no heſitation in ſaying that it would be highly improper to introduce it into Pariſh Churches, and to ſubſtitute it in the room of the plain, natural, ſoothing melody of our beſt old Pſalm Tunes, which ſpeaks more forcibly to the hearts, and gives more warmth to the devotions of a Chriſtian congregation than all the ingenious and learned contrivances of complex counterpoint.

It may be neceſſary to obſerve, that this part of the Charge (relating to Pſalmody) was not added till towards the concluſion of the Viſitation.

I have

I have the ſatisfaction to find, that it is ſcarce neceſſary for me to ſay one word on the ſubject of rectorial and vicarial houſes, of churches and chancels. From the report you make to me, as well as from that of the worthy archdeacons who have formerly made parochial viſitations, I have reaſon to believe that the ſtate of theſe edifices is, in general, ſuch as does credit to the care of the clergy and their pariſhioners. In ſome places I perceive the incumbents have not only repaired, but rebuilt their houſes, in others have adorned and beautified both their parſonages, and their glebes, and by thus rendering them not only comfortable, but even delightful and elegant retreats, have thrown *temptations to reſidence* in the way of their ſucceſſors which it will be impoſſible for them to reſiſt.

It is alſo highly to the honour of this Dioceſe that in general the ſtipends allowed to the curates are more liberal than in many other parts of the kingdom. In ſeveral inſtances I find that the ſtipend for one church only is 50 l. a year; for two 60 l. and the uſe of a parſonage; and in the unwholeſome parts of the Dioceſe 70 l. and even 80 l. (that is 40 l. for each church) with the ſame indulgence of a houſe to reſide in. Finding then theſe laudable examples ſet by many excellent clergymen, all I have to do is to expreſs my hearty approbation of them, to make them the guide of my own conduct, to convert a partial practice into a general

a general rule for the whole Dioceſe, and to deſire that hereafter all titles for orders, and all appointments of curates, may be conformable to that rule. In eſtabliſhing this regulation I think I may venture to promiſe myſelf that not only you yourſelves, but every friend to religion will go along with me. Indeed the public voice as well as the reaſonableneſs of the thing itſelf, has long called for a little more indulgence towards the moſt laborious and moſt indigent claſſes of our order; and it is impoſſible to reſiſt (even if you were diſpoſed to do it, which you certainly are not) the general opinion of mankind. And where can this liberal ſyſtem more properly originate than in that Dioceſe, where by the voluntary kindneſs of many individuals the foundations of it are already laid; in that Dioceſe to which the metropolis gives conſideration and weight, and to which the world will naturally look up for the firſt movements in a meaſure of this nature. Here too every article of ſubſiſtence, and every neceſſary of life muſt of courſe be more difficult to procure, and will fall more heavily on our curates, than in remoter countries, and in ſome parts of it unwholeſome air, broken health, and ruined conſtitutions require additional comfort, aſſiſtance and ſupport.

You are therefore, my brethren, moſt evidently and moſt peculiarly called upon by every circumſtance of your ſituation, as well as by every ordinary

nary motive of juſtice, humanity, compaſſion, and chriſtian charity, to extend more widely the kindneſs you have already begun to exerciſe; and there is not, I truſt, a ſingle individual who now hears me, that can withold his approbation from ſuch a propoſition as this; that will not feel the equity and the juſtice of it; that will not even exert himſelf to the utmoſt in compleating this work of brotherly beneficence, and in diffuſing it gradually throughout the whole extent of this Dioceſe.

I have now, my brethren, given you my ſentiments on ſuch matters as your own Anſwers to my Queries have ſuggeſted to me; and the regulations I have propoſed are ſuch as appeared to me highly neceſſary not only to the general intereſts of religion, the welfare of our people, and the credit of our order, but (ſome of them at leaſt) to the very exiſtence of our eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, and to the permanency and ſecurity of our religious eſtabliſhment. For let us not flatter ourſelves, my brethren, that becauſe we have the laws and the government on our ſide we are therefore perfectly ſafe, are perfectly ſecure in our privileges and poſſeſſions, be our characters and our conduct ever ſo inconſiſtent with our profeſſion, and our various duties ever ſo much neglected. At preſent it is true we enjoy a profound calm: we poſſeſs, I truſt, a large ſhare of the public eſteem; we have received a recent and ſubſtantial proof of it, for which we ought to be thankful

thankful and grateful. But on what is this favour and this ſupport of the legiſlature founded? Unqueſtionably on this idea, that we are by our miniſterial labours promoting moſt effectually the peace, the morals, the good order, the welfare, and the happineſs of the community. While this conviction prevails, we ſhall never fail to meet with countenance and protection. But if once we relinquiſh this ground; if we deſert our proper ſtations, and ruſh into the world; if we conſider our preferments merely as life eſtates without any regard to the perſonal ſervices and perſonal duties with which they are charged, we ſhall moſt aſſuredly forfeit the good opinion, and with that the ſupport of the ſtate; we ſhall be left to combat our adverſaries as we can; the firm ground we now ſtand upon will ſink from under our feet, and our properties and revenues will be ſwept away, like thoſe of our brethren, in a neighbouring kingdom, whoſe deſpoliation (if we may credit the charges brought againſt a large part of the order) has been no leſs owing to their non-reſidence, their ſecularity, their diſſipation, their loſs of the public eſteem, than even to the ſubverſion of their civil government *.

It is therefore moſt evidently our intereſt as well as our duty to demonſtrate our gratitude to the

* See the debates of the national aſſembly on this queſtion in the *Mercure National*, &c.

public by redoubling our zeal and activity in our profeſſional occupations. In our hands are placed to a great degree the morals and the religion of this country! A moſt ſacred and important truſt! And we cannot more effectually ſerve the ſtate than by executing this truſt with fidelity and care. In this great cauſe, my brethren, we are all embarked from the higheſt to the loweſt; and it is a cauſe worthy of our moſt ſtrenuous exertions. It was with a view of impreſſing this great truth deeply on your minds that I have now treſpaſſed ſo long (too long I fear) upon your patience, and have ſpoken with a plainneſs and a freedom, which I thought the occaſion required. In a caſe where the intereſts of religion, and the ſalvation of mankind were concerned, I conceived it was my indiſpenſable duty to ſtate to you fairly, fully and diſtinctly, whatever ſeemed to me neceſſary to promote thoſe great ends. And ſuch is the confidence I have in your candour, in your good ſenſe, in your zeal for the welfare of thoſe committed to your care, that you will, I doubt not, moſt chearfully co-operate with me in every meaſure that tends to advance it, even though ſome of the meaſures propoſed ſhould be attended with a little perſonal inconvenience to yourſelves. This is a ſacrifice we muſt all of us ſometimes make to duty; and the conſciouſneſs of having done this will afford us the moſt heart-felt ſatisfaction at a time when all earthly comforts will vaniſh away. To render thouſands of our fellow-

creatures virtuous and uſeful here, and to conduct them through the paths of true religion, to immortal glory and endleſs felicity hereafter, is the nobleſt employment in which a human being can be engaged. Moſt fortunately for us, my brethren, that employment is ours; and by a faithful diſcharge of it, the very loweſt of our order may render themſelves more uſeful to ſociety, and more worthy of veneration and eſteem, than all the ſages and philoſophers of Pagan antiquity taken together. Not all their philoſophy, not all their learning, not all their eloquence were ever able to correct the morals of a ſingle village, or to introduce into it that decency, that regularity, that ſanctity of manners, and in conſequence of it, that comfort, eaſe and happineſs which we now ſcarce ever fail to ſee in every chriſtian village, where there is a reſident, a diligent, a conſcientious, an exemplary clergyman. Let us then ſet a due value on the importance and dignity of our profeſſion, and let it excite in us an honeſt ambition to raiſe it and ourſelves every day more and more in the eſtimation of mankind, by exerting our utmoſt efforts to diffuſe both by our doctrine and our example a general ſpirit of true Chriſtian piety, and a general purity of manners throughout the land. By this we ſhall contribute our part, and a moſt eſſential part to the welfare of the community; we ſhall add the powerful ſanctions of religion to the authority of the laws, the ſilent operation of national virtue to the viſible effects

of

of political wiſdom and integrity; and above all, we ſhall ſecure to our country, and to ourſelves, the favour and protection of that Almighty Being who can alone enſure to us the proſperity and tranquillity we now enjoy, whilſt a large part of Europe is convulſed to its very centre; and who amidſt the diſſolution of kingdoms and the wreck of empires can alone preſerve our admirable conſtitution both civil and eccleſiaſtical uninjured and unimpaired.

THE END.